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# THE MEDICAL NEWS AND LIBRARY.

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HUDSON ON FEVER,

20 PAGES.

### ADDRESS.

*Abstract of an Address Delivered by Prof. TYNDALL at the Opening of the Meeting of the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at the Meeting at Norwich, Aug. 1868.*

The learned successor of Faraday at the Royal Institution, after an introduction of great length, proceeded as follows: "There have been writers who affirmed that the pyramids of Egypt were the productions of nature; and in his early youth Alexander Von Humboldt wrote an essay with the express object of refuting this notion. We now regard the pyramids as the work of men's hands, aided probably by machinery of which no record remains. We picture to ourselves the swarming workers toiling at those vast erections, lifting the inert stones, and, guided by the volition, the skill, and

possibly at times by the whip of the architect, placing the stones in the proper positions. The blocks in this case were moved by a power external to themselves, and the final form of the pyramid expressed the thought of its human builder. Let us pass from this illustration of building power to another of a different kind. When a solution of common salt is slowly evaporated, the water which holds the salt in solution disappears, but the salt itself remains behind. At a certain stage of concentration the salt can no longer retain the liquid form; its particles, or molecules, as they are called, begin to deposit themselves as minute solids, so minute, indeed, as to defy all microscopic power. As evaporation continues solidification goes on, and we finally obtain, through the clustering together of innumerable molecules, a finite mass of salt of a definite form. What is this form? It sometimes seems a mimicry of the archi-

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ecture of Egypt. We have little pyramids built by the salt, terrace above terrace from base to apex, forming thus a series of steps resembling those up which the Egyptian traveller is dragged by his guides. The human mind is as little disposed to look at these pyramidal salt-crystals without further question, as to look at the pyramids of Egypt without inquiring whence they came. How, then, are those salt-pyramids built up ? Guided by analogy you may suppose that, swarming among the constituent molecules of the salt, there is an invisible population, guided and coerced by some invisible master, and placing the atomic blocks in their positions. This, however, is not the scientific idea, nor do I think your good sense will accept it as a likely one. The scientific idea is that the molecules act upon each other without the intervention of slave labour ; that they attract each other and repel each other at certain definite points, and in certain definite directions ; and that the pyramidal form is the result of this play of attraction and repulsion. While, then, the blocks of Egypt were laid down by a power external to themselves, these molecular blocks of salt are self-positioned, being fixed in their places by the forces with which they act upon each other. But passing from what we are accustomed to regard as a dead mineral to a living grain of corn. When it is examined by polarized light chromatic phenomena similar to those noticed in crystals are observed. And why ? Because the architecture of the grain resembles in some degree the architecture of the crystal. In the corn the molecules are also set in definite positions, from which they act upon the light. But what has built together the molecules of corn ? I have already said regarding crystalline architecture that you may, if you please, consider the atoms and molecules to be placed in position by a power external to themselves. The same hypothesis is open to you now. But if in the case of crystals you have rejected this notion of an external architect, I think you are bound to reject it now, and to conclude that the molecules of the corn are self-positioned by the forces with which they act upon each other. It would be poor philosophy to invoke an external agent in the one case and to reject it in the other. Instead of cutting our grain of corn into thin slices and subjecting it to the action of polarized light, let us place it in the earth and subject it to a certain de-

gree of warmth. In other words, let the molecules, both of the corn and of the surrounding earth, be kept in a state of agitation ; for warmth, as most of you know, is, in the eye of science, tremulous molecular motion. Under these circumstances, the grain and the substances which surround it interact, and a molecular architecture is the result of this interaction. A bud is formed ; this bud reaches the surface, where it is exposed to the sun's rays, which are also to be regarded as a kind of a vibratory motion. And as the common motion of heat with which the grain and the substances surrounding it were first endowed enabled the grain and these substances to coalesce, so the specific motion of the sun's rays now enables the green bud to feed upon the carbonic acid and the aqueous vapour of the air, appropriating those constituents of both for which the blade has an elective attraction, and permitting the other constituent to resume its place in the air. Thus forces are active at the root, forces are active in the blade, the matter of the earth and the matter of the atmosphere are drawn towards the plant, and the plant augments in size. We have in succession the bud, the stalk, the ear, the full corn in the ear. For the forces here at play act in a cycle which is completed by the production of grains similar to that with which the process began. Now, there is nothing in this process which necessarily eludes the power of mind as we know it. An intellect the same in kind as our own would, if only sufficiently expanded, be able to follow the whole process from beginning to end. No entirely new intellectual faculty would be needed for this purpose. The duly expanded mind would see in the process and its consummation an instance of the play of molecular force. It would see every molecule placed in its position by the specific attractions and repulsions exerted between it and other molecules. Nay, given the grain and its environment, an intellect the same in kind as our own, but sufficiently expanded, might trace *a priori* every step of the process, and by the application of mechanical principles would be able to demonstrate that the cycle of action must end, as it is seen to end, in the reproduction of forms like that with which the operation began. A similar necessity rules here to that which rules the planets in their circuits round the sun. You will notice that I am stating my

truth strongly, as at the beginning we agreed it should be stated. But I must go still further, and affirm that in the eye of science *the animal body* is just as much the product of molecular force as the stalk and ear of corn, or as the crystal or salt of sugar. Many of its parts are obviously mechanical. Take the human heart, for example, with its exquisite system of valves, or take the eye, or the hand. Animal heat, moreover, is the same in kind as the heat of a fire, being produced by the same chemical process. Animal motion, too, is as directly derived from the food of the animal, as the motion of Trevethyck's walking-engine from the fuel in its furnace. As regards matter the animal body creates nothing; as regards force it creates nothing. Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to his stature? All that has been said regarding the plant may be re-stated with regard to the animal. Every particle that enters into the composition of a muscle, a nerve, or a bone, has been placed in its position by molecular force. And unless the existence of law in these matters be denied, and the element of caprice introduced, we must conclude that, given the relation of any molecule of the body to its environment, its position in the body might be predicted. Our difficulty is not with the quality of the problem, but with its complexity; and this difficulty might be met by the simple expansion of the faculties which man now possesses. Given this expansion, and given the necessary molecular data, and the chick might be deduced as rigorously and as logically from the egg as the existence of Neptune was deduced from the disturbances of Uranus, or as conical refraction was reduced from the undulatory theory of light. You see I am not mincing matters, but avowing nakedly what many scientific thinkers more or less distinctly believe. The formation of a crystal, a plant, or an animal, is in their eyes a purely mechanical problem, which differs from the problems of ordinary mechanics in the smallness of the masses and the complexity of the processes involved. Here you have one-half of our dual truth; let us now glance at the other half. Associated with this wonderful mechanism of the animal body we have phenomena no less certain than those of physics, but between which and the mechanism we discern no necessary connection. A man, for example, can say,

I feel, I think, I love; but how does consciousness infuse itself into the problem? The human brain is said to be the organ of thought and feeling; when we are hurt the brain feels it, when we ponder it is the brain that thinks, when our passions or affections are excited it is through the instrumentality of the brain. Let us endeavour to be a little more precise here. I hardly imagine that any profound scientific thinker who has reflected upon the subject exists who would not admit the extreme probability of the hypothesis, that for every fact of consciousness, whether in the domain of sense, of thought, or of emotion, a certain definite molecular condition is set up in the brain; that this relation of physics to consciousness is invariable, so that, given the state of the brain, the corresponding thought or feeling might be inferred; or, given the thought or feeling, the corresponding state of the brain might be inferred. But how inferred? It is at bottom not a case of logical inference at all, but of empirical association. You may reply that many of the inferences of science are of this character; the inference, for example, that an electric current of a given direction will deflect a magnetic needle in a definite way; but the cases differ in this, that the passage from the current to the needle, if not demonstrable, is thinkable, and that we entertain no doubt as to the final mechanical solution of the problem; but the passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is unthinkable. Granted that a definite thought and a definite molecular action in the brain occur simultaneously; we do not possess the intellectual organ, nor apparently any rudiment of the organ, which would enable us to pass by a process of reasoning from the one phenomenon to the other. They appear together, but we do not know why. Were our minds and senses so expanded, strengthened, and illuminated as to enable us to see and feel the very molecules of the brain; were we capable of following all their motions, all their groupings, all their electric discharges, if such there be; and were we intimately acquainted with the corresponding states of thought and feeling, we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, "How are these physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?" The chasm between the two classes of phenomena would still remain

intellectually impassable. Let the consciousness of love, for example, be associated with a right-handed spiral motion of the molecules of the brain, and the consciousness of hate with a left-handed spiral motion. We should then know when we love that the motion is in one direction, and when we hate that the motion is in the other; but the "why?" would still remain unanswered. In affirming that the growth of the body is mechanical, and that thought as exercised by us, has its correlative in the physics of the brain, I think the position of the "materialist" is stated as far as that position is a tenable one. I think the materialist will be able finally to maintain this position against all attacks; but I do not think, as the human mind is at the present constituted, that he can pass beyond it. I do not think he is entitled to say that his molecular groupings and his molecular motions explain everything. In reality they explain nothing. The utmost he can affirm is the association of two classes of phenomena, of whose real bond of union he is in absolute ignorance. The problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the prescientific ages. Phosphorus is known to enter into the composition of the human brain, and a courageous writer has exclaimed, in his trenchant German, "Ohne phosphor kein Gedanke." That may or may not be the case; but even if we knew it to be the case, the knowledge would not lighten our darkness. On both sides of the zone here assigned to the materialist he is equally helpless. If you ask him whence is this "matter" of which we have been discoursing, who or what divided it into molecules, who or what impressed upon them this necessity of running into organic forms, he has no answer. Science also is mute in reply to these questions. But if the materialist is confounded and science rendered dumb, who else is entitled to answer? To whom has the secret been revealed? Let us lower our head and acknowledge our ignorance one and all. Perhaps the mystery may resolve itself into knowledge at some future day. The process of things upon this earth has been one of amelioration. It is a long way from the Iguanodon and his contemporaries to the president and members of the British Association. And whether we regard the improvement from the scientific or from the

theological point of view, as the result of progressive development, or as the result of successive exhibitions of creative energy, neither view entitles us to assume that man's present faculties end the series—that the process of amelioration stops at him. A time may, therefore, come when this ultra-scientific region by which we are now enfolded may offer itself to terrestrial, if not to human investigation. Two-thirds of the rays emitted by the sun fail to arouse in the eye the sense of vision. The rays exist, but the visual organ requisite for their translation into light does not exist. And so from this region of darkness and mystery which surrounds us, rays may now be darting which require but the development of the proper intellectual organs to translate them into knowledge as far surpassing ours as ours does that of the wallowing reptiles which once held possession of this planet. Meanwhile the mystery is not without its uses. It certainly may be made a power in the human soul; but it is a power which has feeling, not knowledge, for its base. It may be and will be, and we hope is, turned to account, both in steady and strengthening the intellect, and in rescuing man from that littleness to which, in the struggle for existence, or for precedence in the world, he is continually prone.—*Medical Press and Circular*, Sept. 2, 1868.

#### MEDICAL NEWS.

#### DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

*Death from Chloroform.*—Dr. E. A. CLARK adds (*Humboldt Medical Archives*, Nov. 1868) another case to the long list of deaths from the inhalation of chloroform. Charles S. ——, aged 31, was admitted into the St. Louis City Hospital in October, affected with prolapsus of the rectum and hemorrhoids. It was determined to return them while the patient was under the influence of chloroform. He was apparently in the full vigor of health, and the heart and lungs were normal. A drachm of chloroform was poured upon a napkin. After the inhalation had continued about two minutes, Dr. C. began to manipulate the tumour, but finding that it still gave pain, he discontinued, and another drachm of chloroform was administered. Very soon the patient had the usual spasm, and in about thirty seconds the muscles began

to relax, and the chloroform inhalation was discontinued. The pulse was normal, the breathing slightly stertorous, the face was more livid than usual. The patient was turned upon his right side for greater ease in the operation, but, in about one minute from the time the chloroform was withdrawn, it was observed he had ceased breathing, and that the pulse at the wrist and carotids was imperceptible, while the superficial vessels were full and distended, and the face of a dark, livid colour. The ordinary efforts for resuscitation were resorted to with the effect of causing three or four long, full inspirations, but the heart never beat again from the moment natural respiration ceased.

A *post-mortem* revealed considerable serous exudation beneath the arachnoid, with venous congestion of the brain; ventricles empty and the choroid plexus congested; the heart empty and its structure normal; lungs healthy, presenting, however, some hypostatic congestion on the posterior surface.

*Massachusetts Medical College.*—This school has lost, by resignation, the valuable services of its very able and highly respected Professor of Obstetrics and Medical Jurisprudence, Dr. D. HUMPHREYS STORER. Dr. S. justly enjoys an exalted reputation as a skilful physician, and as a learned naturalist; and wherever known, is esteemed a courteous, high-minded, and most honourable gentleman.

The following letter, addressed to him by his colleagues in the Medical Faculty, well expresses their estimate of his long and successful labours and their regret at the separation.

"To Prof. D. H. Storer, M. D.

"DEAR FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE: It is with great regret that we, the members of the Medical Faculty, have received your note stating that you have sent your resignation to the Corporation. We had hoped to continue long to profit by your services and to enjoy your companionship. We trusted that you would share with us the pleasure of seeing our institution, so long and deeply indebted to your labours, flourishing and extending still further its usefulness and reputation.

"You will carry with you the kindest remembrances of your colleagues and the

recollection of services which we all feel to have been of the highest value to the cause of medical education. We are sure that nothing will ever impair your interest in the medical school and the university, on the roll of whose honoured instructors your name will stand recorded, when the edifices which now shelter their students shall have all crumbled in ruin. You will still remain, as we confidently believe, the friend and counsellor of those with whom you have been so long associated.

"As a teacher, you have been earnest, interesting, instructive, indefatigable; as Dean, attentive to every duty, and ever watchful for the welfare of the students; as a colleague, always kind and courteous; in all things conscientious and devoted.

"This is our record in simple truth and justice.

"Accept our kindest wishes at parting, and believe us very sincerely your friends."

Dr. CHAS. E. BUCKINGHAM has been appointed to the chair vacated by Dr. Storer.

*A Complimentary Reception* was given on the evening of the 24th of October, by members of the profession to Professors Gross and Pancoast on their return home from their visit to Europe. Several of our eminent professional brethren from New York, Baltimore, etc., the Governor of the State and the Mayor of the city, were present by invitation. A number of complimentary speeches were elicited, and the reunion is said to have been a very pleasant one.

*Boston City Hospital.*—Dr. B. E. CUTTING, of Roxbury, has been chosen one of the Board of Consulting Physicians and Surgeons to the Boston City Hospital, in place of the late Dr. John Homans.

*Medical Department of Dartmouth College* (Hanover, N. H.)—Prof. E. R. PEASLEE has been transferred from the chair of Anatomy and Physiology which he has occupied for the past twenty-eight years, to that of Diseases of Women; and Dr. Lyman B. How, late Demonstrator of Anatomy, succeeds Dr. Peaslee in the chair of Anatomy and Physiology. Professor Dixi Crosby, Professor of Surgery and Obstetrics, has resigned the former Chair in favour of his son, Professor A. B. Crosby.

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The present number of the "NEWS" contains the completion of "HUDSON'S LECTURES ON FEVER." In the number for January, 1869, will be commenced a new and important work, just issued in London—

### A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON THE WASTING DISEASES OF INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD.

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Containing elaborate chapters on Atrophy from insufficient nourishment, Chronic Diarrhoea, Chronic Vomiting, Rickets, Congenital Syphilis, Worms, Chronic Tuberculosis, Chronic Pulmonary Phthisis, Tuberculosis of Glands, etc.

It will be seen that the practical tendency of this work will maintain the character of the volumes which have appeared through the columns of the MEDICAL NEWS AND LIBRARY. As it will commence with the year and will probably be completed by December, 1869, this affords a very eligible time for new subscribers to begin their subscriptions.

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